

SUB A17

1. An apparatus for extracting information desired by a user from a source, the apparatus comprising:

an input module for acquiring text from a user;

a filtering module configured to receive the text from the input module and compare the text to a corpus to acquire a micro-context relevant to the text, the filtering module configured to locate the information by matching the micro-context to a database; and

a presentation module configured to receive the information and present the information to a user.

SUB B27 2. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the micro-context is independent of a hierarchical ordering of the database.

SUB A27 3. The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the filtering module comprises a context construction module configured to receive text from the input module and combine words in the text to form the micro-context, the micro-context further being characteristic of the information.

4. The apparatus of claim 3, wherein the filtering module further comprises a context comparison module configured to receive the micro-context from the context construction module and acquire a macro-context relevant to the database by comparing the micro-context to the corpus.

5. The apparatus of claim 4, wherein the filtering module further comprises an information matching module configured to receive the macro-context from the context comparison module and determine a location of the macro-context in the database, the database being contextually indexed for searching by context.

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- 1 6. The apparatus of claim 5, wherein the presentation module is configured to
2 selectively present the information in a format designated by a user.
3
4 7. The apparatus of claim 5, further comprising a mining module configured to
5 independently add new data to the database by selectively retrieving the new data from the
6 source.
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8 ~~SUB B47~~ 8. The apparatus of claim 7, wherein the mining module retrieves data from the
9 source over a network.
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11 ~~SUB A37~~ 9. The apparatus of claim 8, wherein the source is substantially remote from the
12 mining module.
13
14 ~~SUB B47~~ 10. The apparatus of claim 9, wherein the network is the Internet.
15
16 11. The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the information includes data about products
17 purchasable by a user over the Internet.
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19 ~~SUB A47~~ 12. The apparatus of claim 5, further comprising an updating module configured to
20 independently update the information periodically after presentation to a user.
21
22 13. The apparatus of claim 12, wherein the database further comprises a subset
23 configured to store the information for future access by a user.
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16. The apparatus of claim 15, further comprising a mining module configured to independently add new data to the database by selectively retrieving new data from the source.

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1 17. A method for extracting information desired by a user from a source, the method
2 comprising the steps of:
3 receiving text from a user, wherein the text is descriptive of the information sought;
4 comparing the text to a corpus to acquire a macro-context for the information;
5 locating the information that matches the macro-context in a database; and
6 presenting the information to a user.
7

8 18. The method of claim 17, further comprising the step of combining relevant
9 words in the text to form a micro-context characteristic of the information before the step of
10 comparing the text to a corpus.
11

12 19. The method of claim 18, wherein the step of locating information that matches
13 the macro-context in a database comprises searching through indices in the database similar
14 in format to the macro-contexts, and returning the information linked to indices which
15 correlate to the macro-contexts.
16

17 20. The method of claim 19, wherein the step of presenting the information to a user
18 comprises presenting the information in a format designated by a user.
19

20 21. The method of claim 20, further comprising the step of selectively retrieving data
21 from the source over a network to add to the database.
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23 22. The method of claim 21, further comprising the step of independently updating
24 the information periodically after the step of presenting the information to a user.
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